

Message Text

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TAGS: OREP (DRINAN, ROBERT F.)

SUBJECT: CODEL DRINAN VISIT TO THE USSR

1. CONGRESSMAN ROBERT DRINAN (D-MASS) VISITED THE USSR FROM AUGUST 14 THROUGH 21. IN LENINGRAD, CODEL MET LOCAL OVIR OFFICIALS AND WITH A REPRESENTATIVE GROUP OF JEWISH DISSIDENTS. IN MOSCOW CODEL WAS RECEIVED AT THE ALL-UNION OVIR (REPORTED SEPTTEL), THE USA INSTITUTE (DETAILS OF THIS CALL BEING REPORTED BY AIRGRAM), AND BY REV. ZHIDKOV, ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE OFFICIAL BAPTIST CHURCH. HE MET WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF DISSIDENT MUSCOVITE JEWS AND WAS ALSO RECEIVED BY SCULPTOR ERNST NEIZVESTNY, AND LEADING DISSIDENT ANDREY SAKHAROV. CODEL LUNCHEDED AT THE RESIDENCE (USA INSTITUTE AMONG THE GUESTS) AND HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE.

2. CONGRESSMAN DRINAN SAID THAT HE LEFT EVEN MORE DEPRESSED ABOUT THE SITUATION OF THE SOVIET JEWS THAN WAS THE CASE BEFORE HE ARRIVED. HE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN AT WHAT HE TERMED "THEIR HELPLESSNESS BEFORE A DELIBERATELY ARBITRARY POWER." HE STATED THAT HE INTENDED TO ORGANIZE THE CONGRESS AND ALSO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AN EFFORT TO EASE THE DIFFICULTIES IN WHICH THE SOVIET JEWISH COMMUNITY FINDS ITSELF. HE ADDED THAT HE IS NOW CONVINCED THAT THE JACKSON-VANIK LEGISLATION IS UNWORKABLE AND MUST BE REPLACED BY SOME NEW LEGISLATION THAT COULD PUT THE SOVIETS ON NOTICE THAT THEIR PERFORMANCE IN EMIGRATION ISSUE WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE CONGRESS, WITHOUT FORCING THEM TO LOSE FACE BY SETTING A SPECIFIC NUMBER.

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3. CODEL NOTED THAT HE WAS IMPRESSED -- IMPRESSED BUT NOT CONVINCED -- BY TWO ARGUMENTS MADE TO HIM, ONE THAT EMIGRATION IS AN ISSUE THAT THE SOVIETS SEE IN TERMS OTHER THAN IS THE CASE IN THE WEST (THAT THERE IS GENUINE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING THAT ONE COULD LEGITIMATELY WANT TO LEAVE ONE'S HOMELAND), AND SECOND THAT THE SECOND WORLD WAR HAS CLEARLY HAD A MUCH GREATER IMPACT ON THE THINKING OF ALL RUSSIANS THAN HE HAD REALIZED.

4. DRIAN SEEMED GENUINELY PLEASED WITH HIS PROGRAM AND STRESSED AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD CERTAINLY DONE "ITS SHARE" IN GETTING HIM HIS VISA.
STOESSEL

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